

Culturally Relevant Teaching



Eagle Creek Elementary is Making it Happen!



WE ARE Eagle Creek Elementary School (ECES) is a part of MSD Pike Township schools, an urban school district in the northwest corner of Indianapolis. With 11,069 scholars, Pike schools have a wide distribution of multi-ethnic students, representing 69 countries and 58 native languages.

OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

ECES serves a diverse population of 520 students with 23% English Language Learners (ELL) and 51% qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Sixteen languages are spoken in our homes with our student population being comprised of: 2% Asian, 46% Black, 18% Hispanic, 9% Multi-Racial and 25% White.

OUR TEACHERS All new teachers to Pike receive training in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model to support the instructional needs of ELL students in the classroom. Extensive SIOP training is offered to all teachers in the district, of which numerous ECES teachers have taken part.

OUR PROMISING PRACTICE Our staff is engaging in courageous conversations about race in an effort to close the achievement gap. These candid conversations are encouraging our staff to look critically at the biases and assumption they bring with them into the classroom. Although vulnerable, they will better equip us to define how culturally relevant teaching will look in our school. As a result of this journey, our teachers will be able to be more reflective and work harder to use culturally relevant instruction as an instrument to bridge the gap between the knowledge students already have and academic knowledge thus increasing academic achievement and positively influencing our students' self-image.

OUR STEPS During the 2014-2015 school year, ECES teacher Ayana Coles shared her passion for cultural awareness through facilitating an informal study group focusing on race and culture, entitled *Courageous Conversations*. The outcome of this study included evidence of our need to broaden this conversation to include all staff for optimal change. The 2015-2016 school year began with a focus on cultural relevancy, and its impact on instruction. Mrs. Coles facilitated a series of professional development sessions. Hearing staff share their personal stories of racially charged and culturally driven experience was powerful. As a result all staff reflect, share, and evaluate how their personal perceptions influence their professional practice. ECES has imbedded a focus on cultural proficiency into our School Improvement Plan to support our commitment to deepen our understanding of instructional practices that support varied cultures and races.

IN OUR OWN WORDS "Culturally Relevant Teaching has made us all more aware of the different perspectives of our staff and students. It has opened our eyes to the fact that different cultures and people have backgrounds and experiences that differ." - Mrs. Owensby

"I've been able to better connect with student's whose home lives are very different from my own. I know to ask meaningful specific questions about the lives my students have outside of school." - Mr. Smith

"Cultural Relevance, which I feel we are just tapping the surface, creates a better understanding and inward look at myself and the values and beliefs that were given to me based on experiences and the values and beliefs I want to have and/or change in myself." - Mrs. Banks

For more information about our school or corporation, email: kmkempton@pike.k12.in.us or visit our website: <http://www.pike.k12.in.us/11/home>